Amendment to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (original).   A method of managing network elements in a network, comprising:

providing a network element independent module that includes functions for managing different types of network elements; and

providing a network element dependent module that includes functions for managing a specific type of network element; and

providing a network management application that calls the functions of the network element independent and dependent modules to manage a plurality of network elements in a network.

Claim 2 (original).   The method of claim 1, wherein the functions of the network element dependent module are executable at run time through dynamic class loading.

Claim 3 (original).   The method of claim 1, wherein the network element dependent module includes specifications of the network element.

Claim 4 (original).   The method of claim 3, wherein the specifications include a graphical representation of the network element.

Claim 5 (original).   A system for managing network elements in a network, comprising:

a network element independent module that includes functions for managing different types of network elements;

a network element dependent module that includes functions for managing a specific type of network element; and

a network management application that calls the functions of the network element independent and dependent modules to manage a plurality of network elements in a network.

Claim 6 (original).   The system of claim 5, wherein the functions of the network element dependent module are executable at run time through dynamic class loading.

Claim 7 (original).   The system of claim 5, wherein the network element dependent module includes specifications of the network element.

Claim 8 (original).   The system of claim 7, wherein the specifications include a graphical representation of the network element.

Claim 9 (original).   A method of managing network elements in a network, comprising:

sending a request to a network element for a network element dependent module that includes functions for managing the specific type of the network element;

executing the network element dependent module to create an interface to the network element; and

utilizing the interface to manage the network element.

Claim 10 (original).   The method of claim 9, further comprising sending a request to the network element for the specific type of the network element.

Claim 11 (original).   The method of claim 9, further comprising sending a request to the network element for the software version of the network element.

Claim 12 (currently amended).   The method of claim 9, further comprising:

sending a request to the network element for the specific type of the network element;

sending a request to the network element for the software version of the network element; and

utilizing a stored network element dependent module if the specific type and software version of the network element are <u>compatible with the specific type and software version of another network element on the network</u> ~~the same~~.

Claim 13 (original).   The method of claim 9, further comprising receiving an object change message that there is a new network element on the network.

Claim 14 (original).   A system for managing network elements in a network, comprising:

a means for sending a request to a network element for a network element dependent module that includes functions for managing the specific type of the network element;

a means for executing the network element dependent module to create an interface to the network element; and

a means for utilizing the interface to manage the network element.

Claim 15 (original).   The system of claim 14, further comprising sending a request to the network element for the specific type of the network element.

Claim 16 (original).   The system of claim 14, further comprising sending a request to the network element for the software version of the network element.

Claim 17 (currently amended).   The system of claim 14, further comprising:

sending a request to the network element for the specific type of the network element;

sending a request to the network element for the software version of the network element; and

utilizing a stored network element dependent module if the specific type and software version of the network element are compatible with the specific type and software version of another network element on the network the same.

Claim 18 (original).   The system of claim 14, further comprising receiving an object change message that there is a new network element on the network.

Claim 19 (new): The method of claim 1 further comprising receiving a packet identifying a new network element and sending an object change message to inform the network management application that there is a new network element.

Claim 20 (new): The method of claim 1 further comprising:

receiving at the network management application an object change message;

sending a request to the new network element for information on a new network element identified by the object change message; and

initializing a network element independent module for the new network element.